

Minutes

13th Plenum

Revolutionary Workers League, U.S.A.

Chicago, Illinois.

For Members only

Price 5 cents

September 1942

13th Plenum of R/L - Minutes

Saturday, August 22, 1942

Chicago, Illinois.

First Session - 10:30 AM. Present - 212, 412, 101, 360, 250, 515.
Chairman- 101. Assistant to Secretary, 250.

Organization of Plenum ; report by 515. To abide by regular rules as established at previous Plenums. Reporters to have 1 hour, sub reports 15 minutes, and summaries.

Agenda- India and world situation; sub point, Post War; U.S. Internal and Trade Union; Organization - sub points Waller, Internal. Reporters, PC proposal- India and "World Situation, 412. Post war, 360; United States Internal and Trade Union, 212; Organizational, 212, R/L Internal separate point. Carried.

Motion- 515: That Post War be a full report instead of sub point. Defeated.

Motion-212: Plenum adjourn now until 1 PM in order that working members of the Plenum may be present for report. Carried.

Motion- 250: That Plenum continue, but sub point on Post War as first report (written outline present). Obviated

First session adjourned until 1PM.

Second session - same present. Chairman: 212.

Report on India and "World Situation, 412; 1 hour.

410 arrived during conclusion of report.

Motion 412: That meeting on India be arranged at the earliest opportunity in Chicago, NY and Washington under the auspices of the R/L if possible, and, if not, under the auspices of a "Working Committee for Independent India". Carried.

Motion-412: That 101 and 412 be assigned to get in touch with Indians resident in this country. Carried.

Motion-412: That the R/L, Central Committee send the following telegram to the British Embassy, Washington, D.C.: The Central Committee of the R/L, meeting in Plenary session demands immediate withdrawal of all British officials and troops from India.

Telegram to Franklin D. Roosevelt, President of U.S.A., Commander in Chief of U.S. Army, Washington, D.C.: Central Committee of R/L meeting in Plenary session demands immediate withdrawal of all USA armed forces from India.

Substitute Motion- 101: that copies of manifesto on India be sent to State department, British Embassy, and whoever we can reach.

Carried, Roll Call # 4.

Amendment 212: introduce above substitute as separate motion.

Obviated.

Sub report - Post War Order- 360 15 minutes and 15 minute extension

Questions and discussion on both reports.

Motions 212: Write a manifesto on India, committee of 2 to be elected. Carried.

Motions 212, continued: Next issue of International News be completely devoted to Indian revolution in thesis form.

Amendment 515: refer to Political Committee. Carried.

Motion 212: take steps to contact Indians on east and west coast and locally through utilization of our own press. Carried.

Motion 212: The revolutionary situation has existed for some time in India. The revolution itself, however, began on August 8th. Although the revolution will reach higher and lower ebbs and flows, this date may be considered as the starting point in the same sense as February 1917. At a later stage in the revolution an insurrection will take place.

Roll Call # 1 Defeated.

Substitute motion, 515: The events of yesterday are merely a higher stage of the revolution in India. Naturally the insurrectionary stage is still ahead. (from PC minutes of August 10, 1942)

Roll Call # 2, Carried.

Statement 515 (from May 1942 I.N.) It should be emphasized that this is not a broad general perspective but a matter of the immediate future. The pre-conditions for revolution set forth in the I.N. May, 1940, have matured. If these objective conditions are combined with the subjective conditions of a Marxist Party, then there can be not only an Indian revolution, but also a breakdown of the war front of the exploiters; and the beginning of what will later be the final conflict.

Motion 212: A federation of European states is possible under capitalism, but only on the basis of military force, and an intensified economy of scarcity. The only barriers to such a federation are primarily the proletarian revolution and a "balance of power" in imperialist politics. (substitute for section 2K of Post War document)

Roll Call # 3, Carried.

Motion- to limit discussion to one round. Defeated.

Summaries: 360 - 10 minutes on Post War Order: 412-30 minutes on India and World Situation.

Motion 412: (from PC minutes # 449, June 29, '42) Amendments to India Draft Thesis: 1 - section 5, paragraph 2, in first sentence strike out words 'and peasants'. Carried.

2 - point 6, 4th sentence, change "must have the leadership" to - "must be under the leadership". Carried.

Motion: approve report on India and World Situation.

Roll Call # 6 Carried.

Motion: Approve report on Post war Order. Roll Call # 5 Carried.

Statement 360: with roll call # 5 - "I'm for but against the amendment."

Statement 410: with roll call # 6 - "I'm not voting as I didn't hear the full report".

Committee to write manifesto on India - 212, and 412 elected.

Motion 515: manifesto on India to be submitted to Plenum. Carried.

Second session adjourned 1 hour for supper.

Third session. Present: 515, 212, 101, 412, 360, 410, 250, 770, 880.
Chairman: 412.

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Statement to Plenum 212: "I herewith state to the Plenum that I deny making use of any slanderous epithets to comrade 515 with the exception of the uses of the term "demagogue", the statement "you two comrades are functioning as a clique" and the references to comrades 880 and 360 as stooges of 515; which statements I hereby withdraw and for which I apologize."

Statement to Plenum 515: "I herewith state to the Plenum that I deny making use of any slanderous epithets directed to comrade 212 with the exception of the use of the terms "liar" on one or more occasions "irresponsible" and "Freudian"; which statements I hereby withdraw and for which I apologize".

Motion, 212 and 515: to expunge from the record all references to charges, etc. Carried.

Report on United States Internal and Trade Union - 212: 50 minutes.

Questions and discussion.

Motion 515: (from PC minutes August 17, '42 # 455) R/L Steel workers fraction get out a mimeed shop bulletin for the three plants they have contact with each month. Material to be issued nationally. National Secretary to work with fraction. Steel workers shop bulletin to use same public address as other Shop Bulletins. Work toward progressive group.

Roll Call # 8 Carried.

Substitute motion 212: (from PC minutes, August 17, '42 # 455) Material on Steel be submitted to Shop Steward Group for special supplement or as general material.

Roll Call # 7 Defeated.

Amendment 515: That the Steel fraction join the Shop Steward movement, that the R/L fraction vote for Steel Workers issue their own "Steel Workers shop Steward", that the Steel Workers Education Group issue the bulletin as an affiliate to the Trade Union Discussion League.

Carried.

Motion 515: Trade Union director bring in proposals on Constitution, etc. for Shop Steward group. Referred to PC.

(880 arrived from work at this time, 10 PM)

Motion: To approve United States Internal and Trade Union report:

Roll Call # 9 Carried.

Statement 880 on roll calls 8, 9, 10, "Not voting because I did not hear the reports".

Motion 201: any time during Plenum that committee writes motion on structure and policy for National Trade Union structure, it be presented to body and included as part of this session. Carried.

Report on Organization R/L - 212: 1 hour.

Questions and discussion.

Actions of PC on Organization: 1- 250. be director of Negro work. Carried.

2- Recommend to Labor Defense Congress fraction that "Labor Defense" be published in the east. W of Washington as editor. Carried.

3- Recommend to TUDL that its perspective be for printed Shop Steward. Carried.

PC Motions on Org'z, continued: Amendment 101: to # 3 - Provided finances and technical crew of League is not involved until PW is stabilized. Carried.

4 - For intervention in India.

Carried.

5- Someone to Detroit.

Carried. (412 against)

6 - Attempt to increase work in the east, concentrate on NY. Carried.

7 - Purchase additional equipment to facilitate future publications.

Carried.

8 - Organization of Anti-militarism department. Carried.

9 - National Secretary to write to and instruct 690 to send in complete detailed report of last years work in T.U.; shops organized, contracts signed, and any progress toward Progressive Group, with a warning that failure to comply with this instruction will result in expulsion from League.

Roll Call # 14 Carried.

Amendment 880: (to motion # 9) change to "suspension" instead of "expulsion".

Roll Call # 12 Defeated

Motion 360: Altho the trend is to the right, the League can make some organizational gains on the basis of planned coordinated activity, in the present period since there is serious mass discontent, which the right shift acts to aggravate. Roll Call # 11 Carried.

Motion 412: Eastern Regional Conference be held in Washington, September 6th.

Carried.

Motion 880: recommend to fraction in IDC that the name be changed from "Labor Defense Congress" to "Fighting Labor Defense". Defeated.

Amendment 250 to above motion by 360, (roll call # 13, leave out phrase "altho trend is to the right" and last clause of sentence.

Roll Call # 13 Defeated.

Amendment 360: (to point # 9 on PC motions, strike out point dealing with disciplinary expulsion. Roll Call # 15 Defeated.

Statement 880 and 360: (with vote on roll call # 14) "I am against on the basis that expulsion should not take place merely on the basis of lack of a letter of reply".

Motion: adopt RAL Organizational report. Roll Call # 15 Carried.

Statement 250: (on roll call # 15) I am for with my amendment to 360 motion on "right shift" in class relations."

Statement 412: (on roll call # 15) "I am voting against the Org report because I completely disagree with the PC thesis that objectively the swing is to the right. I also record my view that our stagnancy is due to lack of political balance as well as organizational defects. I reserve the right to strive for the adoption of this position within the disciplinary framework of the League."

Third session adjourned 12:45 AM.

Fourth session convened, 10:15 AM, Sunday August 23rd, 1942.

Present: Same as last session, 880 arrived late.

Chairman: 101. Point on agenda - RAL internal.

Motion 515 on Procedure. Because there is no official report the 3 members who constituted the PC take floor first, each to have 30 minutes with 15 minutes summary. Carried as amended.

Amendment 412: Speakers of PC have 15 minutes each, 10 minutes for summary. Carried.

Amendment 360: 20 minutes for each speaker. Defeated.

Motion 212: That 212 have double time to present his position. Def.

Reports on K/L Internal by - 515, 212, and 360. Each granted 15 minutes extension.

Questions and discussion. Summaries: 360, 515, 212.

Motion 412: That Convention of K/L be held x city, Thanksgiving weekend, and the I.B. be immediately open for the pre-convention discussion. Roll Call # 19. Carried.

Amendment 880: that if conditions warrant it, the PC to change city. Carried.

Motion 412: to elect a new Political Committee. Carried.

Motion 212: The solution for the internal problem lies in re-emphasizing our orientation to the masses and in electing a committee that stands four-square for that orientation, and is capable of carrying it out. As an auxiliary step, the Plenum must place enough counterweight on the PC to be able to mediate between the two stubborn main characters. Roll Call # 17. Defeated.

Motion 212: PC minutes shall be detailed as to the substance of reports and disputes. Defeated.

Counter motion 515: that the of the future be taken as of the past, that we record motions, documents, statements. Carried.

Statement 515: The Plenum has endorsed every Plenum report presented by the PC. In addition the PC between this and the last Plenum has carried out all political and organizational tasks it confronted in the League and class on the same high political level as previous PC's, in spite of the handicap of functioning in an atmosphere of personal squabbles.

Statement 515: The Plenum has four comrades in the center who can be selected as alternates to the PC. Of these four comrades comrade 360 is the most developed politically and in the past, in spite of his inefficiency, has done more pol-technical work on all of our publications, and more shop work than all the other comrades in the center put together, in addition, since December 7, 1941, he has been the League's only speaker, and has spoken several times each month on the political questions of the day, in addition he has carried out unit work. If he is not qualified for an alternate to the PC than neither are the other three.

Statement 250 and 410: Comrade 515's statement on comrade 360 is accurate on the one point of political development, but as Chi city organizer I must point out that his other activity has been stated out of all proportion to reality. 360's only consistent activity has been shop work, which ordinarily requires 4 days a month, but due to his "inefficiency" takes 20 or 24 days a month. His unit activity has been sporadic, consisting of assignments for which he volunteers but does not carry out, hindering others. His public speaking has not averaged twice a month out of daily possibilities, and 2 of the other 3 comrades do speak for the League a minimum of once a week. Comrade 360, is, incidentally a full time functionary, supported by the organization. In ratio to the amount of time he has, he does less than most.

Motion 515: (from Organization Memorandum of July 20) This "crisis" at the top is far below the organizational stage; it is still in the realm of personal friction as a by-product of the objective situation and the make-up of each comrade in functioning in relation to others. But because our forces are so small, and our isolation in the present war period so heavy any small factor can create a rupture that may cripple our effective functioning as the League.

Roll Call # 19 Carried.

Motion 515: (from Organization Memorandum of July 20) National Secretary and Organizational Secretary to be added to the list with the 2nd, 3rd, and 5th alternates who are our only public speakers. These to speak publicly, not haphazardly but with careful selection of time and place for all speakers. Carried as amended.

Amendment 212: (to above motion) Org secretary (I.U. director) shall speak as Trade Union functionary. Roll Call # 16 Carried.

Statement 360: The 250 - 410 joint statement is not an accurate statement of fact.

Motion 515: Elect PC of three and alternates. Carried.

Motion 212: Elect PC of 6. Unconstitutional

Motion 212: Elect PC of 4. Defeated

Nominees 515: 515, 212, 101.

Nominees 212: 515, 360, 101.

Elected - as new PC 515, 212, 101.

Motion 410: that 250 be first alternate. Out of Order.

515 slate on alternates in order listed: 412, 440, 360, 410, 880, 250,

410 slate on alternates in order listed: 250, 412, 360, 880, 440, 410.

Elected alternates to PC in order: 1. 412; 2. 440; 3. 360; 4. 410; 5. 250; 6. 880.

Addendum - note- this motion presented and voted before election of new PC and alternates. Sec.

Motion 515: to suspend "H" from Central Committee on basis of letter to 770, stating that he is resigning from League, and since we have not heard anything from him since the last Plenum. Next alternate, 250, to be moved up. Roll Call # 18, Carried.

Note - Comrade 440 absent throughout Plenum.

13th Plenum of Revolutionary Workers League, Adjourned August 23, 1942, Sunday 3: 00 P.M. Chicago, Illinois.

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Plenum Documents

1. India and the world situation:

Thesis on India - International News
Article on India - August 22, 1942, F.I.
Manifesto on India - Sept. Oct. 1942, I.N.

2. Post War Developments (sub report)

Outline in pre-convention Internal Bulletin.

3. Internal United States and Trade Union

Outline in Internal Bulletin

4. Organization.

Memorandum of the P.C., I.B.

Reporters outline, I.B.

Plenum motion on Personell, forthcoming I.B.

Plenum Roll Call Voting Chart.

RC #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
412:	ag	f	f	ag	f	f	ag	f	f	f	ag	ag	ag	f	ags	f	ag	ag	f
101:	ag	nv	nv	f	f	f	ag	f	f	ag	f	ag	ag	f	f	f	ag	f	f
360:	ag	f	ag	f	fs	f	ag	f	f	ag	f	nv	f	ags	f	ag	ag	f	f
515:	ag	f	ag	f	f	f	ag	f	f	ag	nr	ag	ag	f	f	ag	ag	f	f
250:	nv	nv	f	ag	f	f	f	ag	f	f	ag	ag	ag	f	fs	f	ag	nv	f
212:	f	ag	f	ag	f	f	f	ag	f	ag	f	ag	ag	f	f	f	f	ag	ag
820:	o	o	o	o	o	o	nv	nv	nv	nv	nv	f	f	ags	f	nr	ag	ag	f
410:	nv	nv	f	f	nv	nvs	crnv	f	er	or	or	or	or	or	or	nv	ag	f	nv
440:	Absent from Plenum																		
consultative																			
770:	o	o	o	o	o	o	ag	f	f	ag	f	ag	ag	f	f	nv	ag	f	f

Key to voting chart: Top line is roll call number. Left hand column number substituted for comrade's name.

Symbols used: ag - against. f - for. nv - not voting. nr - not registering. o - absent from session. or - present at session but not participating in vote, (out of room or asleep). s - indicates there is a statement in the minutes with the recorded vote.